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ABSTRACT

Perceptive historians recognize that club sports, defined as a group of people gathered to engage in competitive physical activity, are not, as many would have us believe, a product of modern times. Historically, there has always been a desire on the part of people for sports participation. Several years ago a questionnaire was compiled and sent to universities, colleges, and junior colleges. Eighty percent of the respondents had sports clubs. People want to be active and play, and therefore there is a demand for club sports. No other area in a school's curriculum gets the voluntary participation of such a large percentage of the student body, faculty, staff, and community as does the health, physical education, recreation, and athletic complex. This participation takes the form of both active sports participation and spectator participation. If the opportunity for physical activity is provided to students, they will take care of the rest. It is now necessary to meet the challenges of providing these opportunities for physical activity. (RC)

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THE ORGIN AND PHILOSPHY OF CLUB SPORTS

Did you know that 25 to 30 per cent of the facility cost for new public school buildings is for facilities for health, physical education, recreation, and athletics. We both know that there is need for even more facilities. The percentage of funds expended for operating costs for HPER & A however are a much smaller fraction of the total operational budget. When operational costs begin to reach 25 per cent of the total budget, then and only then will we be able to do the job that students demand of us.

The question the uninformed observer is sure to ask, "What student demand?" and comment further, "I see no picket line, I know of no strikes, I know of no petitions," and my answer would be, "Come along with me, let us examine and explore what history has to tell us"

Perceptive historians recognize that forms of club sports which we define as a group of people gathered to engage in competitive physical activity are not as many would have us believe a product of modern times. Savage writing in 1929 in Bulletin No. 23 of the Carnagie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching said and I quote, "The influence of the English College System couple with English rowing is probably responsible for the division in 1839 of the Yale undergraduate body into twelve intramural boating clubs of twenty men each." We know that these clubs did not restrict themselves to intramural competition only but that they competed against other schools and colleges. Later in the same report Savage says, "it should be clearly understood taht the undergraduate and not the Director of Physical Education, the Coach or the faculty member was the founder of intramural athletics and they were fostered to provide opportunities for increased numbers of students to participate."

Let us not stop our exploitation into history at the year 1839, Gardiner in his book "Athletics of the Ancient World" says and again I quote, "The citics of

SP009 544

Asia Minor developed far earlier than those of the main land. There, probably, athletics first became part of education and the athletic festival arose. Sport was no longer aristocratic, for the state required the services of everyone of the citizens. Soon every state must have had its sports ground (gymnasium) and its wrestling schools (palaestrae). In the settled life of the city, religion too bacame oraanized, with regular holy days and festivals, and here the national love of competition found free scope. There were sports, music, and dancing all in the form of competition. As a rule the competitions would be confined to citizens but sometimes visitors were allowed to compete." Isn't this competition between gymnasium and palaestrae nothing more than competition between sports clubs?

Earlier in the same text, Gardiner said, athletics were to the Greek far more than mere recreation. To the Homeric worrior they were the means of training and maintaining the physical vigor and activity which he needed in a war-like age. But they were almost equally essential to the Greek of the fifth century. Greece was never a land of peace; quarrels between neighboring states were frequent; their petty wars required no long preparations; the citizen might at a moments notice be called upon to take the field and fight, and in the conditions of ancient war-fare his safety depended upon his physical fitness.

Gardiner continues, "This explains the important place that athletics held in Greek education; it explains too why games, which with us form such a prominent and popular part of school life, never developed to the same extent in Greece. Games have many advantages over pure athletics. They are superior in interest, and they are superior as a training of character, developing the team feeling and unselfishness. But as physical training they are invaluable chiefly for those who excel in them; those who have no aptitude for them derive but little benefit. They cannot train a whole nation.

The defect of athletics proper and of all systems of physical drill is that the interest is quickly exhausted. This defect was remedied in Greece by constant

competitions for all ages and not only local but also national competition. In the latter a new and nobler element was introduced, for the athlete completed not merely as an individual but as a representative of his state."

Tracing the club setting still further back in history one can readily imagine that the ancient chinese art of Kung Fu or Medical Gymnastics being practiced by groups of people, in a setting taht we would consider a club today.

The object of these brief forays into sports' history is not necessarily at attempt to sell you on the idea that these are the immediate forerunners of the sports clubs and club type of competition taht we have today. It is rather to point out to you that since time immemorial there has been a desire on the part of all people for sports participation.

Several years ago I compiled a questionnaire which I mailed out to 546 universities, colleges, and junior colleges in the United States. I found that 80 per cent of those responding and the response was slightly over 48 per cent, has sports clubs. Sixty-one per cent of the clubs at that time participated in intercollegiate competition. Quits likely this percentage has since increased.

We as physical educators in the broadest sense of the term must see to it that the 25-30 per cent of the school capital building program allocated to HPER & A are used to their fullest capacity. We are not doing our job unless we do. As I will continually point out, people, that great mass of common everyday citizens out there, people like you and me want to be active and play. They also will do whatever is needed to make that possible if only you and I will ask them to do it. Today the demand called the clubs sports. It is no difficult from the demand of the ancient world or of the world of tomarrow.

Ziegler in his book "Philosophical Foundations for Health, Physical Education and Recreation Education," attempts to explain the phenomena of sports participation in this way, "People engage in games and sports for many reasons. The motivation behind such participation is so complex that there is really no general agreement

on the matter. Do we take in these activities for fun, for recreation, for self-expression, for health, for exercise, for competition, or for what? Or do we do it for a variety of reasons, some stronger at times than others?"

Ziegler tells us nothing really except that we've got a tiger by the tail. If we allow the tiger to continue to lead us we have failed. If however we begin to do the leading and the profession of physical education has never lead, only followed, and we give the students activity. The pressure will not be on us but on the administration, the boards of trustees, the boards of regents, the boards of education, to give us the money, personnel and facilities to run an adequate program.

The answer to the next question has been the bane of our profession. We who profess to be beleivers in the value of physical exercise allow ourselves to become bogged down in cerebral exercises debating what form that exercise should take: (1) Should it be vigorous and body strengthening? (2) Should it be of a recreative nature? (3) Should it be competitive in nature? Should it be intramural in nature? (4) Should it be interscholastic/intercollegiate in nature? Should it be controlled by the NCAA, the NAIA, the AIAW, the AAU, the NJCAA, the NJSHS?

Hell, I could care less. What the people want and what they will support is physical exercise. Give it to them in any form, in any context, in any facility, with whatever supplies are on hand and people will play. History has said time after time "people want to exercise."

With due respect to my distinguished colleagues here who are going to tell you about all of the obstacles which must be overcome to participate in a club sport program whether they be: (1) the legal ratifications; (2) the possibility of injury to participants; (3) the lack of facilities; (4) the lack of proper supervision; and I could go on and on detailing the difficulties connected with sports clubs participation, the fact of the matter is that the only difficulty with sports clubs participation is you and me.

We want participation on our terms. The record of history is clear however. When an incorrect response is given to a specific challenge we are faced with what Toynbee the great historian calls a Time of Trouble. We must adapt to the challenge of providing activity or we as a profession will become ineffective.

With due respect to our professional colleagues in women's sports they are being drawn into areas that they do not wish to get into. I agree wholeheartedly that scholarship athletics are a hazardous, degrading, educational liability. However, our women student are jsut as deserving as men and we have let the courts force us into giving scholarships to our female participants. Why can't we lead?

The result for women's athletics we hurry and get ahead of the legal pressure will be just as chaotic, just as fraught with surreptitious behavior as are our men's program.

Being chauvanistic, I pointed out an example of the women's problems first but the lack of leadership by men in giving acceptable status to a women's program has enlarged our vocabulary so that depending upon our interpretation, Title IX, is either a cuss word, a slang expression, an idiomatic expression or as H.E.W. prefers to think of it a new addition to Webster's dictionary of proper terms.

What does history really tell us about club sports? It tells us to get off-dead center and do something.

It tells us that if:

(1) Our facilities are not being used 24 hours a day there is a time and a place for sports club participation.

It tells us that if:

(2) You think you do not have the funds available to operate the program you have forgotton about the bake sales, the car washes, the bingo games, and so forth that you held when you were younger, truely dedicated professional rather

than the tired old philosopher you are now.

It tells us that if:

(3) We do have the kind of participation I've just mentioned, the time, energy, and vocal support are available to build new buildings and get more than the 25 per cent of the school building budget spent on athletics and physical education facilities and programs.

No other area of your school's curriculum gets the voluntary participation of such a large percentage of your student body, faculty, staff, and community as does the HPER and athletic complex. If you don't believe, take a body count. I have.

This participation takes the form of both active sports participation and spectator participation but the form which is not needed is forced participation.

I can recall Dr. Harold Jack speculating in a graduate class that probably the biggest deterent to physical education today were the cumpulsory physical education requirement laws passed near the turn of the century.

We don't need them. They have made us lazy. All that we must do is to provide the opportunity and the students will take care of the rest.

No other curricular area can make that claim. History tell us so.

We must be leaders who lead. The demand is for physical activity. Will we give or rather are we giving the correct repsonse to the challenge.

If not, we are in a Time of Trouble.